United Nations A/60/857

General Assembly

Distr.: General
23 May 2006

Original: English

Sixtieth session
Agenda items 42 and 43

Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations

Culture of peace

Letter dated 9 May 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Jordan and Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from our Governments, we have the honour to transmit herewith a joint declaration on the occasion of the State visit of their Majesties the King and Queen of Spain to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, from 24 to 26 May 2006 (see annex).

The Amman Declaration was signed in Amman on 24 April 2006 by Abdelelah Al-Khatib, Foreign Minister of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and Miguel Ángel Moratinos Cuyaubé, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain.

We should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 42 and 43.

(*Signed*) Zeid Ra'ad Zeid **Al-Hussein**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of the Hashemite
Kingdom of Jordan to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Juan Antonio **Yáñez-Barneuvo**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations

06-35772 (E) 300506

Annex to the letter dated 9 May 2006 from the Permanent Representatives of Jordan and Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic, English and Spanish]

JORDANIAN-SPANISH DECLARATION ON THE OCCASION OF THE STATE VISIT OF THEIR MAJESTIES THE KING AND QUEEN of SPAIN TO THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

On the occasion of the state visit by their Majesties the King and Queen of Spain to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Foreign Ministers of the Kingdoms of Jordan and Spain agreed to establish a working group, composed of senior officials and leading personalities of civil society from both countries, to devise practical means of promoting respect and understanding between the West and the Arab and Muslim World.

AMMAN DECLARATION

The West and the Arab and Muslim world enjoy a common history rich in cultural interaction and shared values. However, certain perceptions that have surfaced recently threaten our mutual values. Such misconceptions may even risk drifting our two worlds apart. Currently in the West there is a clear misunderstanding of Arab and Islamic values. The link often made between such values and terrorism is especially unjust and erroneous. In a similar way, in the Muslim world, while its own symbols of identity are vigorously reaffirmed, there is a distorted image of the West, its values, its policies and actions in dealing with the Arab and Muslim world.

Jordan and Spain have historically been at the crossroads between North and South, and East and West. Therefore, Jordan and Spain are well aware that the close ties among various cultures are enormously enriching. In this age of globalization, we cannot allow those who preach hatred and violence to dominate the ongoing debate.

We must proclaim a new paradigm, opening channels between the different peoples and cultures of the world in such a way that diversity is not seen as a threat to security but, on

the contrary, as a promising opportunity to stimulate the exchange of knowledge, dialogue and cooperation.

An inspiring example in our region is provided by the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, set up as a result of the 1995 Barcelona Declaration and which has just been given a fresh impetus on the occasion of its tenth anniversary.

On the international level, our two governments have welcomed the decision by the UN Secretary-General to create a high level group in order to articulate and prepare measures in favour of an Alliance of Civilizations. This initiative aims at consolidating a fairer, more stable and more peaceful international order, based on the common values that make up the heritage of humankind. These global civilized principles allow for diverse political, social, religious and cultural models which command respect and acceptance.

We are convinced that civilizations should not view each other as being in conflict and competition but rather as complementary to one another in a continual process that aims at enhancing dialogue and cooperation. In that sense, Western communities in the Muslim world and Muslim communities in the West should constitute a bridge for dialogue and understanding. Such a bridge can only be founded on their exemplary conduct and their respect of the values, norms and laws of their host countries. Islam has never been a stranger to Europe, while Christianity has never been alien in the Arab and Muslim lands.

When facing threats to world security, such as terrorism, it becomes vital to strengthen international cooperation. Terrorism has no religion and no face. Furthermore, building on the principle that there can be no justification for violence, we must address the political problems that promote the culture of violence and hence may damage our mutual understanding. The concept of an Alliance of Civilizations is the expression of our great hope in achieving these goals.

In this context, the two Governments note with satisfaction the favourable and positive international response to the Amman Message, an important Jordanian Initiative, which has presented the true image of Islam and its noble values of peace and acceptance. The Amman Message is a message of moral values and humanity, which rejects extremism as a deviation from Islamic beliefs. It stresses the true values of Islam and promotes a proper understanding of the faith which honors all human beings and provides common ground among different faiths and peoples.

The recent cartoon crisis has highlighted the seriousness of the problem we are facing. Freedom of expression is a universal right, but it must not be used to stigmatize the most profound beliefs of a whole community. We call for this right to be exercised with responsibility. It is imperative to find a formula that balances this freedom with the freedom of faith, necessary for enhancing the culture of dialogue and coexistence based on mutual respect. At the same time, Jet us note that nothing justifies the violent reactions against innocent people and institutions. We, therefore, wish to express our sympathy to those who have suffered from that crisis. We cannot allow ourselves to be swept along by those who, from extremist positions, wish to exploit this situation for their own narrow interests.

United in our determination to eradicate intolerance and fanaticism, whatever its origin, both Governments declare their will to work towards the Alliance of Civilizations, to spread Amman Message and to promote intercultural dialogue, making the most of the possibilities offered by institutions such as the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation.

We stress the importance of developing a rational and democratic political and academic discourse which will enable LIS fight radicalism, work for the adequate treatment of migratory flows, prevent discrimination and incitement to racial or ethnic hate, promote cooperation with the media to foster improved mutual understanding, and make education the main instrument of learning about diversity and about each other. We are encouraged by the fact that these objectives constitute a significant part of the recently approved Euro~ Mediterranean Action Plan.

Finally, the commemoration in Seville next May of the 600th Anniversary of the death of the great Arab historian and philosopher Ibn Khaldun will give us a new opportunity to highlight that our cultures have always been enriched by contributions from both sides. The commemorative exhibition and the debate on the life and ideas of Ibn Khaldun should help us face current problems with intellect and clarity and to create a more united world.

It is our conviction that there are more factors uniting us than separating us. We share fundamental values and we must, therefore, *tear* down the wall of misunderstanding and hatred. It is time to stress the need for dialogue, understanding and mutual respect, so that the voice of reason may prevail.

Amman, 24 April 2006

Abdelelah **Al-Khatib**
Foreign Minister
The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Miguel **Moratinos Cuyaubé**
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain